

Demetrios Kydones and Italy

FRANCES KIANKA

In the spring of 1369 Demetrios Kydones, a major political force at the imperial court in Constantinople for well over a decade, set sail from Byzantium with Emperor John V and a large retinue. Their destination was Italy; their immediate goal was to meet with Pope Urban V and his cardinals in Rome. The purpose of that extraordinary journey, however, and the subsequent meetings between pope and emperor in the fall of that year, was twofold: to assure Pope Urban that the Byzantine emperor was no longer a schismatic and to persuade the pope and his curia to support a new military initiative that would aid the Byzantines in fending off the ever-increasing threat to the empire from the Ottoman Turks.¹

Kydones' diplomatic activities in aid of this cause had continued for a number of years and finally culminated in the personal profession of faith (*professio fidei*) made by John V in the presence of the pope and the Roman cardinals in Rome on 18 October 1369 during the early days of their lengthy stay in Italy. At the private ceremony Kydones, who had made the official translation of the emperor's text from Latin to Greek, read the Greek version aloud. The Latin version was read by one of the pope's deputies. After the two versions were read, John V signed both of them and affixed his golden imperial seal. A colorful public ceremony followed a few days later on the steps of St. Peter's.

The profession of faith made by John V was essentially that used in the thirteenth century by his ancestor Michael VIII (1259–82), the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty, who had agreed to a union with the Roman church not through a personal meeting with the pope but through his representatives at the Council of Lyons in 1274. Like that of Michael VIII, the profession of faith made by John V proclaimed his belief in the Latin

This paper is dedicated to Father George T. Dennis, S.J., whose scholarly interest and support over many years have sustained me in my study of Demetrios Kydones.

¹The present article is based on research in preparation for a book on the life and works of Demetrios Kydones. Portions of this material have been published in F. Kianka, "Demetrius Cydones (c. 1324–c. 1397): Intellectual and Diplomatic Relations between Byzantium and the West in the Fourteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1981), and idem, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy: The Role of Demetrius Cydones," *International History Review* 7 (1985), 175–213, which discuss a number of topics in greater detail and include further bibliography. On Kydones' career and writings, see also R. J. Loenertz, "Démétrius Cydonès I: De la naissance à l'année 1373," *OCP* 36 (1970), 47–72; idem, "Démétrius Cydonès II: De 1373 à 1375," *OCP* 37 (1971), 5–39; and F. Tinnefeld, *Demetrios Kydones Briefe*, I.1, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 12 (Stuttgart, 1981), 1–74.

addition to the creed—the *filioque*—and his conviction that the Roman church held the primacy over the universal church, a primacy first given by Christ to St. Peter and passed on to his successor, the bishop of Rome, who was endowed with full power (*plena potestas*) in the universal church.

The emperor's act, for all its solemnity, its high visibility, and the pageantry surrounding it, was a purely personal one and did not entail any obligations on his subjects, or their church and its hierarchy, to follow suit. No member of the Byzantine clergy and no representative of Philotheos, the patriarch of Constantinople, were even present during these events in Rome; certainly none gave their official approval to them. The emperor, in fact, made no attempt to enforce any sort of ecclesiastical union or to encourage his subjects to follow his example. His profession of faith seems to have been all but forgotten when the emperor and his retinue returned home.

The diplomacy, too, seems to have been stillborn. However, the story of that Byzantine journey to Italy, and its disappointing outcome, is well known in its major narrative outlines. The many factors that led up to it over a number of years and the diplomatic exchanges, false starts, and delays were treated especially by Oskar Halecki in his aptly titled work *Un empereur de Byzance à Rome*.² Rather than retrace his steps, I would like to focus here on one factor that played a role in the Byzantine diplomatic mission to Rome: the attraction that western Europe and Italy had for pro-Western Byzantines such as Demetrios Kydones in the years before and after the Italian journey, an attraction based on both intellectual and political needs and perceptions.

Kydones was well prepared for participating in both aspects of the emperor's purpose in courting the papacy—the political and the religious aspects. As a young man, in 1347, with his once wealthy family financially ruined through the social and political upheaval of the civil war years, Kydones had entered the service of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos. He held the position of *mesazōn*, or “intermediary,” a position of potentially substantial influence in both internal and external affairs. In his first *Apology* he describes this office and the circumstances surrounding his appointment by the emperor. Kydones mentions how he received from John VI both “friendship and a government position; not the kind of position that one would consider fit for a young man who was just leaving the classroom and the schools, but the sort that a man grown old in virtue and in knowledge would covet. I was immediately numbered among the first officials. . . . I was trusted no less than the closest of his friends. And . . . he ordered that no one should be able to make requests of him in any other way than by first speaking to me about them.”³

In the fourteenth century, the functions of the Byzantine master of requests seem to have been joined to those of the τοῖς πράγμασι μεσάζων, the term that Kantakouzenos uses in his *History* in connection with Kydones when describing the dramatic moment in 1354 when he learned that his rival John V had secretly entered Constantinople. In book IV Kantakouzenos notes that among those present was “[Demetrios] Kydones, who

²Originally published Warsaw, 1930; repr. London, 1972.

³Demetrios Kydones, *Apology I*, ed. G. Mercati, in *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV*, ST 56 (Vatican City, 1931), p. 360, lines 27–34. On Kydones' first *Apology*, see F. Kianka, “The *Apology* of Demetrius Cydones: A Fourteenth-Century Autobiographical Source,” *ByzSt* 7 (1980), 57–71.

always lived in the palace, not only because of the great favor that he enjoyed with the emperor but also because the minister for government affairs (τοῖς πράγμασι μεσάζων) had to be with the emperor both day and night.”⁴

The role of the *mesazōn* is difficult to define because of the often ambiguous use of this term by Byzantine writers to denote at times almost any important official in the imperial administration and at other times to denote individuals who could be considered as actual “prime ministers.” Translating the term *mesazōn* as “minister for government affairs” is perhaps a good way to indicate the broad and fluctuating functions and influence of the office. From the studies of Jean Verpeaux, Hans-Georg Beck, and Raymond J. Loenertz,⁵ it is clear that in the fourteenth century the role of the *mesazōn* varied from one reign to the next and even within the reign of a single emperor, such as John V, who held the throne for more than three decades. The powers of the *mesazōn* changed because of many factors, including his own abilities and those of the emperor who chose him. In the mid-fourteenth century the *mesazōn* was the head of one or more departments of the civil administration, but during the reign of John VI he did not have the power and authority generally associated with the office of prime minister. Kydones’ functions included those of master of requests, noted earlier, and also those of chancellor or head of the imperial secretarial staff.⁶ Although his functions were limited to one or two areas of administration, his role as *mesazōn* increased his influence in the government since it involved a close and continual personal contact with the emperor who chose him especially for this role. During the reign of John V, his functions changed somewhat, extending into several other areas of administration, including financial, and his personal influence waxed and waned over the years. But, most important for this discussion, his role included not only internal but also foreign affairs, in particular relations with western Europe and the papacy.

It is important to discuss the nature of Kydones’ position because of the extraordinary length of time that he served the emperors in Constantinople—first John VI from 1347 to 1354, then, when Kantakouzenos abdicated in favor of his son-in-law, John V, uninterruptedly from about 1355 to 1372, and with some discontinuity through the 1370s and mid-1380s, extending into the reign of John V’s son and successor, Manuel II. It is also important because of the nature of the issues facing the dwindling empire during Kydones’ long years at the center of Byzantine political and intellectual affairs. Kydones’ diplomatic and scholarly career can be seen as one of the most noteworthy examples of the many contacts between Byzantium and western Europe in the fourteenth century, but it is important to see the interwoven nature of the issues he faced. These issues were both political/diplomatic and intellectual/theological.

Politically, Byzantium’s ability to defend itself against external enemies—the Otto-

⁴John Kantakouzenos, *History*, IV, 39, Bonn ed., 285, lines 7–8.

⁵J. Verpeaux, “Contribution à l’étude de l’administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων,” *BSI* 16 (1955), 270–96; H.-G. Beck, “Der byzantinische ‘Ministerpräsident,’” *BZ* 48 (1955), 309–38, repr. in idem, *Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz* (London, 1972); R. J. Loenertz, “Le chancelier impérial à Byzance au XIV^e et au XIII^e siècle,” *OCP* 26 (1960), 275–300, repr. in idem, *Byzantina et Franco Graeca*, 2 vols., Storia e letteratura 118 and 145 (Rome, 1970–78), I, 441–65.

⁶Demetrios Kydones, letters 41–42, in *Démétrius Cydonès Correspondance* (hereafter *Corr.*), ed. R. J. Loenertz, 2 vols., ST 186 and 208 (Vatican City, 1956–60), I, pp. 74–76. Cf. Loenertz, “Le chancelier impérial à Byzance,” 288–97.

man Turks—was weakened by internal strife and economic dependency. In the realm of ideas—philosophy and theology—the two major controversies of Kydones' age were, first, the internal controversy over the theology of Gregory Palamas and the role of deductive reasoning in theology and, second, the far-reaching problem of relations with the papacy, the Roman church, and Latin theology. These were the major problems that he confronted as both statesman and scholar, the problems that dominated his attitude toward and expectations of western Europe, Italy, and the papacy. Kydones' attempted solutions to the problems and issues just outlined had two main thrusts: an anti-Turkish, pro-Latin policy and an intellectual appreciation for and defense of the philosophy and theology of the Latin West, seen primarily in his attraction to the work of Thomas Aquinas.

During his years as friend, supporter, and minister of Kantakouzenos, and with the emperor's open encouragement, he had become fluent in Latin. Kydones relates how, as *mesazōn*, he frequently found it necessary to rely on the Latin skills of the imperial interpreters in order to deal with the Latins in Constantinople—ambassadors, merchants, mercenaries, and so on—who had official business with the emperor. The inadequacy of the services provided by the interpreters caused difficulty and frustration for Kydones, as it no doubt had for numerous generations of Byzantines and westerners alike. (The lack of a common language was a problem for Byzantine-Latin relations throughout the medieval period and merits more study in itself as a feature of their mutual ignorance, distrust, and misunderstanding.) Kydones' solution to this common problem was straightforward: to study Latin himself rather than to continue to rely on interpreters. His goal was achieved with the aid of a Dominican teacher living in Pera, the Genoese colony across the Golden Horn from Constantinople.

Kydones was soon excelling in his language studies and reading the Latin classics, secular as well as religious. His Dominican instructor assigned him Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra gentiles*, which he read and decided to translate for the sake of his skeptical friends who thought that the West could produce only tavern keepers and sailors. He ended by translating the works of several Latin theologians, especially Aquinas, and around 1357 expressed his agreement with two tenets of the Roman church that the Byzantines had rejected: the Latin doctrine of the *filioque* and the belief in the supremacy of the bishop of Rome over both Eastern and Western Christendom.

Unlike the emperor's profession of faith in Rome, which took place in a political context, Kydones' private conversion had been a very personal act which had followed months of study, discussion, and reflection. Firm in his conviction that he had made the right decision, he tried to explain and defend it in his first *Apology*, which includes a lengthy and rather glowing description of the power of the bishop of Rome over the universal church. Two other *Apologies* focus on defending the theological method and arguments of Thomas Aquinas and on the authority of the Latin church fathers in matters of doctrine.⁷ He did not expect many Byzantines to follow his example and embrace Latin theology and papal power, nor did he urge every acquaintance to do so. However, he did actively encourage them to investigate rationally the issues that had divided the

⁷See F. Kianka, "Demetrius Cydones and Thomas Aquinas," *Byzantion* 52 (1982), 264–86, and idem, "A Late Byzantine Defense of the Latin Church Fathers," *OCP* 49 (1983), 419–25.

two churches for centuries and that stood in the way of an important, indeed crucial, Western alliance.

By the time he had begun to serve John V, about 1355, he was already a well-known interpreter of Latin scholastic theology and Latin theories of papal preeminence in the church. This reputation was both a help and a hindrance. It helped Kydones act as interpreter of Byzantine needs vis-à-vis the papacy, but it hindered him from obtaining wide support among his own people, especially among ecclesiastics. In the fourteenth century, the patriarchs of Constantinople increasingly saw their mission as not only maintaining the ecclesiastical unity of the Orthodox church, but also promoting the cultural and spiritual identity of the Orthodox world—a mission that did not appear compatible with Kydones' pro-Latin, pro-Western stance. In fact, before the start of the voyage to Italy in 1369, Demetrios Kydones had seen his brother Prochoros, a priest and monk on Mount Athos, condemned by a synod for his anti-Palamism, which Demetrios shared. And in 1371, after his return from Italy, Kydones felt obliged to ask John V to release him from his duties at court, ostensibly so that he could return to the West, this time to Avignon, the seat of the papal court, in order to perfect his Latin and study further.

Politically, both John V and Kydones had been looking toward western Europe, and specifically the papacy, since the beginning of the emperor's reign in 1354. Faced with the continuing conquests and settlements of the Ottoman Turks in Byzantine territory, especially in Thrace, both pursued the forging of alliances with the Catholic powers of the West—a new crusade, directed not at the recovery of the Holy Land but at rescuing what remained of Byzantine lands from the aggression of their Muslim enemy. But crusades were religious wars, and any efforts toward organizing one had to include the papacy. Thus Kydones had become convinced that western Europe, under papal leadership, was the main hope for Byzantium's continued existence and freedom.

In a policy speech, *On Accepting Latin Aid*, delivered in Constantinople in 1366, when some Western aid was about to materialize, in the form of a small expedition led by Amadeus of Savoy, Kydones had plainly expressed his conviction that western Europe and the papacy were not Byzantium's enemies or rivals but its most natural political and military allies against the aggression of the Turks. He pointed out that Constantinople (New Rome) had been founded by a contingent of citizens from the ancient capital of the Roman Empire—Old Rome, as the Byzantines called it. Historically, Kydones argued, it was the mother-city of Constantinople and the most likely source of help for the faltering empire of his day.

Who are more fitting allies for Romans than other Romans? Who are more worthy of trust than those who have the same native land? For their city became the metropolis [mother-city] of ours and shared its name with the colonists. . . . So that we and they seem to be one people, and both cities seem to be one city, related and ranked as colony and mother-city. Nothing distinguishes them from us, except that Romulus founded one and Constantine, who succeeded him in the imperial rule, founded the other. But everyone knows that Constantine, on whom all our imperial claims depend, was a Roman and honored the city that he founded with the name of his native land. . . . The dignity of Rome entered the city along with the name, and the Roman Senate moved here, adorning the New Rome, and those who moved [here from Old Rome] were our ancestors.⁸

⁸Demetrios Kydones, *On Accepting Latin Aid*, PG 154, col. 977C-D.

In the winter of 1367 when, after many delays, the trip to Italy seemed to be more imminent, Kydones wrote a letter to his friend Simon Atoumanos, a trilingual biblical scholar and the Latin archbishop of Thebes.⁹ In his letter he expressed his eagerness for the journey and his personal reasons for making it.

The desire to converse with those men possessed me, even when I was very young . . . because their knowledge of theology is combined with a knowledge of philosophy. . . . But now, since my desire has not ceased, I look forward to the spring voyage. I want to associate with them, not because I want to enrich myself or because I love honors (the motives that draw most men to Italy and the Tiber) . . . but what draws me to them is their knowledge of theology and their proceeding everywhere in their dialectics with rational arguments. This indeed is what strikes everyone who has intelligence . . . [and] is the goal of my impulse toward them.¹⁰

In Kydones' mind the goal was clearly twofold: to obtain, at long last, the military aid so badly needed by the empire, and to satisfy his own need to come into personal contact with the learned men who frequented the papal court, a need that he had been unable to satisfy previously because of his duties on behalf of the emperor in Constantinople. In fact, Kydones' eagerness to make the journey to Italy had been prompted by two strong desires: a desire to take positive steps toward obtaining the support of the papacy and a long-standing desire to satisfy his intellectual curiosity by associating with the dialecticians at the papal court who were skilled in the scholastic philosophy and theology he so greatly admired.

Kydones' double motivation for making the journey appears in his correspondence. There he expresses nothing but admiration for Rome, for its bishop, Pope Urban V, for the Roman curia, and for the other learned men who frequented the papal court. There is no hint in his letters of Rome's status as merely a village in comparison with the larger and more prosperous cities of northern Italy such as Florence, Genoa, and Venice. Nor is there any trace of Petrarch's derision of scholastic philosophers as barbaric.

In a letter to his brother, Prochoros, written during his stay in Rome (1369–70), Demetrios wrote: "The great city [i.e., Rome] offers a great abundance of learning and virtue and all the revered things, if one wishes to make use of them. Everyone who knows his own worth hastens to the [Roman] Church and to its ruler, and everyday you would see troops of people who know and are able to teach great things, and no smaller number of men who add deeds to their words."¹¹ The person referred to here as the church's "ruler" is Pope Urban V (1362–70), a highly educated cleric and lover of books who supported educational institutions and added to the growing manuscript collection that, in the fifteenth century, became the Vatican Library.¹² From the inventory of the papal library compiled at his request in 1369, it is clear that at least part of his collection was devoted to secular learning and classical literature. The pope himself took pleasure in

⁹Letter 103, *Corr.*, I, pp. 139–41.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, lines 63–79.

¹¹Letter 39, *Corr.*, I, p. 72, lines 13–18.

¹²E. de Lanouvelle, *Le bienheureux Urbain V et la chrétienté au milieu du XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1928), 93–96; cf. G. Mollat, *Les papes d'Avignon (1305–1378)*, 9th ed. (Paris, 1949), 111–12, and J. Bignami Odier and J. Ruyschaert, *La Bibliothèque vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI*, ST 272 (Vatican City, 1973), 1–2.

the company of learned men with a taste for literature and the study of Latin antiquity.

Two of the learned men whom Kydones met at the papal court were Cardinal Pierre Roger de Beaufort, a nephew of Pope Clement VI (1342–52), and Agapet Colonna, the bishop of Brescia (d. 1380). Pierre Roger, born in 1329, was similar in age to Kydones and also similar in his tastes. He displayed a preference for meditation, books, and study. After the death of Urban V in 1370, he was elected pope and took the name Gregory XI (1370–78). He was fond of Petrarch and his works and invited him to the papal court at Avignon. He also collected the works of Cicero.¹³ Later, in 1375, he would summon Kydones to return to the curia to assist with papal plans for the reunion of the churches. Many years after his trip to Rome Kydones recalled, on more than one occasion, his friendship with Pierre Roger and other highly placed and well-educated Roman clerics as one of the positive aspects of the journey.

These curial clerics and no doubt Pope Urban himself courted Kydones because of his official position in the imperial government, which was described in contemporary Latin documents as “chancellor” (*cancellarius*), and because of his close contact and influence with Emperor John V. But Kydones’ scholarly reputation preceded him to Rome, and there is also good reason to believe that they respected him for his study and translation of Thomas Aquinas and other Latin theologians. Urban V is known to have been an admirer of Aquinas, and Pierre Roger’s uncle, Clement VI, composed a panegyric of Aquinas that included a short catalogue of his works. It is also worth noting that Kydones’ Latin studies had acquainted him with at least some of the revered names of classical Latin literature, especially Cicero and Virgil.¹⁴ There is no evidence that Kydones had contact with Petrarch, Boccaccio, or Coluccio Salutati at this time, but his new acquaintances in Rome were certainly among the patrons of these significant literary figures.¹⁵ The taste of these men for classical antiquity is evident in their patronage and in the inclusion of many works of classical Latin authors in both the papal library and in the private libraries of the cardinals of the Avignon period.

Kydones was a rare Greek who could to some extent share with these men their taste for Latin classicism in language, literature, and thought, and complement it with his own love of classical Greek literature and its corresponding thought-world. He was more than inclined to believe that, as he put it, “the Romans see the noble qualities of the ancient Greeks even in our contemporaries”¹⁶ and that they appreciated men of learning with a taste for philosophy far more than the citizens of Constantinople and Thessalonike did. His overall impression was that Rome was a good place for men who wanted to learn to reason and who wanted to be accepted and appreciated for their intellectual ability.¹⁷

But while, in his judgment, Italy was “a fine place” and Rome was full of “learning

¹³See B. Guillemin, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon, 1309–1376: étude d'une société*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 201 (Paris, 1962), 145. On the contents of the papal library at this time, see Y. Renouard, *The Avignon Papacy, 1305–1403* (London, 1970), 11–15.

¹⁴See, e.g., letter 360, *Corr.*, II, p. 304, lines 19–20.

¹⁵Salutati was in Rome seeking employment from the spring of 1368 until 1370, except for the time he spent on the road with the papal entourage; see B. L. Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padua, 1963), 10, 107–8. Thus Kydones may have made his acquaintance at this time.

¹⁶Letter 93 to Simon Atoumanos (1364), *Corr.*, I, p. 126, lines 26–27.

¹⁷Letter 177 to Rhadenos (1376), *Corr.*, II, pp. 50–51, lines 33–41.

and virtue,"¹⁸ the main purpose of his journey with John V was not to satisfy his intellectual curiosity but to pursue a diplomatic *entente* with the pope and through him with the rulers of western Europe. Such efforts, he hoped, would lead to the urgently needed Byzantine-Latin alliance against the Ottomans. Vis-à-vis these diplomatic and military needs, Kydones' scholarly interests necessarily took a secondary position. Burdened with much of the weight of both petty and important diplomatic affairs in Rome, and later in Venice, he had little time to attend scholarly lectures or to pursue his own research into the Latin manuscripts that were in such abundance there.¹⁹ The admiration of the pope and the curia for him, their enjoyment of his company, and their attempts to keep him in Italy by offers of personal advantages for himself if he stayed finally left him indifferent. "Everything is unpleasant for me," he wrote to Prochoros from Rome, "because I take to heart the fate of my country and the laughter of its enemies . . . since I have accomplished here none of the things for which I have labored."²⁰

A number of things came together at this time to spell disaster for Kydones' diplomatic initiatives. First of all, Pope Urban himself, although very sympathetic toward the Byzantines' plight and pleased with John V's visit to him, was simply unable to provide any direct military or financial assistance to the empire. The financial position of the papacy had been weakened by the many years of military action needed to pacify the papal states and finally to make a return from Avignon to Rome possible. Further, in 1369 the papacy's Italian problems were not yet at an end. The unstable conditions in Italy compelled Urban to return to Avignon, where he died in 1370. His successor, Gregory XI, was obliged to fight a costly war against Bernabò Visconti of Milan in the 1370s and did not return to Rome until 1377, the year before his death.²¹ The papacy's ability to influence the minds and hearts of the Christian rulers of western Europe, which Kydones and the emperor were counting on, had thus been considerably weakened during the years of the Avignon papacy (1305–77) and the Western schism that followed it (1378–1415).

Furthermore, the rivalries of the developing national states of western Europe prevented them from cooperating in any significant joint venture of Latin Christianity against the Turks. The pope's requests to such leaders as Amadeus of Savoy and Louis of Hungary to aid Byzantium remained vague and went largely unheeded. Genoa and Venice, both maritime states with important commercial interests in the East, were more ready to fight each other than to join against a common threat to their economic positions. England and France were engaged in a national and dynastic conflict that became drawn out to such lengths as to be known as the Hundred Years War. The kingdom of Cyprus, usually at the forefront of Latin military action in the eastern Mediterranean because of its location and the eagerness of its ruler for crusades, was in disorder after the assassination in 1369 of King Peter, whose enthusiasm had led a few years earlier to the sack of Alexandria.²²

¹⁸Letter 35 to John Kyparissiotes (1371), *Corr.*, I, p. 68, line 42; *ibid.*, letter 39 to Prochoros Kydones, p. 72, lines 13–14.

¹⁹Letter 39 to Prochoros Kydones, *Corr.*, I, p. 72, lines 4–12.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 73, lines 32–36.

²¹Mollat, *Les papes d'Avignon*, 233–39; *idem*, "Grégoire XI et sa légende," *RHE* 49 (1954), 877; A. Luttrell, "Gregory XI and the Turks: 1370–1378," *OCP* 46 (1980), 395–96, 413–14.

²²See, in general, N. Housely, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305–1378* (Oxford, 1986), esp. 35–38 and 41–49.

All these factors contributed to the disappointment of the hopes that had brought Demetrios Kydones and Emperor John V to Italy. In Kydones' judgment, and no doubt in the emperor's as well, the long, difficult, and costly journey of the Byzantines to Italy was of absolutely no advantage to their country. This realization of the failure of their mission and the futility of their trip seems to have arisen in them well before their departure from Rome in March 1370. Their subsequent stay in Venice, with its haggling over money and loans with both the Venetian government and with its merchant citizens, complicated by John V's lack of funds and need to be financially rescued by his son Manuel, then governor of Thessalonike, certainly did nothing to raise the hopes of the Byzantine party that the trip would ever "result in some wonderfully good thing," as Kydones had speculated in 1367.

The emperor's stay in Venice was prolonged for nearly a year. It was not until the spring of 1371 that Kydones and John V were able to leave and begin the voyage home. After leaving Venice with the emperor, however, Kydones separated from him and made a short trip to the Peloponnese. Kydones finally returned to Constantinople in the summer of 1371, but the emperor's return was delayed even longer. During the emperor's absence, Kydones had to deal with two very important political developments: the demand of the Turkish emir Murad for the return of Gallipoli (summer 1371) and the Turkish defeat of the Serbs at the battle of the Maritsa River (26 September 1371).

John V did not return to his capital until late October 1371, more than a month after the Serbs had been defeated in Macedonia. It seems likely, as George Ostrogorsky argued,²³ that the precarious position of the empire after the Serbian defeat, joined with the perceived futility of his journey to Italy, induced the emperor to come to terms with Murad sometime during 1372. The change of direction in imperial policy seems to be hinted at in Kydones' veiled references to the emperor's having lost confidence in him. These occur in an address to the emperor written shortly after his return from Italy.²⁴ Kydones had long supported a policy of resistance to the Turks at all costs and had, in the emperor's absence, recently reaffirmed his position in his arguments against the surrender of Gallipoli. A policy of resistance, however, could hardly be implemented without the foreign aid that Kydones and the emperor had sought in vain in Italy.

With the failure of his diplomatic initiatives in Italy and with the necessity for some form of Byzantine recognition of Turkish suzerainty, Kydones concluded that his usefulness in the government was at an end. He refused to be associated with a change of policy toward appeasement which, he noted, was favored by a large majority of his countrymen. His address to John V, written in autumn 1371, is an open request to be allowed to resign his post, a request prompted by the realization that his position at court had become untenable. Now that Kydones' diplomacy had come to naught and no Western aid was forthcoming, in spite of John V's abjuration of the schism, the emperor was much more willing to listen to his enemies' complaints against him.

One major set of complaints mentioned in Kydones' address to John V was his theological opinions and beliefs. Kydones had for a number of years openly disagreed with the mainstream of belief in the Byzantine church on three important points: in his approval of the Latin doctrine of the *filioque*, in his acceptance of papal authority, and in

²³See G. Ostrogorsky, "Byzance, état tributaire de l'empire turc," *ZRVI* 5 (1958), esp. 49–51.

²⁴Speech to John V, *Corr.*, I, pp. 10–23, esp. p. 18, lines 32–35.

his rejection of Palamite theology. The latter point involved his admiration for Latin scholasticism, which resulted from his acquaintance with the works of Thomas Aquinas. The enmity against Kydones in certain circles in Constantinople was occasioned in some by dislike for his theological opinions and in others by his pro-Latinism. A part, too, must be attributed to his strong anti-Turkish position, which did not sit well with a number of influential, outspoken individuals who favored appeasement.

But none of these complaints and enmities would have been enough to jeopardize Kydones' position in the government if his major diplomatic overtures in Italy had been successful. The salvaging of the minute empire as a viable political entity, free of the Muslim yoke, was the common goal of Kydones and Emperor John V. Kydones had offered a plan meant to achieve this all-important goal, one that included the personal meetings with Pope Urban V and the papal curia in Rome. That plan had failed. The bitter disappointment of obtaining nothing concrete from the many months of personal diplomacy in Italy, coupled with the Turkish victory in Macedonia in 1371, led to the withdrawal of John V's support for his minister.

Kydones had played a political game with the best of intentions—a reconciliation with Rome and the survival of the empire. He now recognized that he had lost that game. While admitting that he had a certain gift of “clairvoyance” in government affairs,²⁵ he expressed his unwillingness to continue in a position that had become a burden and an irritant to him. Kydones asked to be relieved of his duties so that he could return to a private life of study and return to Italy and perhaps to the papal court, which was again in Avignon. There he might fulfill his longtime desire to continue his study of Latin, begun some twenty years earlier, and profit from the company of the learned clerics whom he had mentioned in his letters from Rome. He could also, he suggests, be of further diplomatic service to the emperor, who would continue to have dealings with the pope and the cardinals. This plan—a winter journey to Italy—was later modified to one involving a spring voyage to France, where he hoped to meet an old friend at the papal court.²⁶

Kydones' plan of combining his own scholarly interests with diplomatic service to the emperor and the pope was not an idiosyncratic “pipe dream.” The pattern had been established earlier and continued into the fifteenth century, for example, with the diplomatic missions of Manuel Chrysoloras. The attraction of Italy, both symbolically and actually, as an intellectual center, as the seat of papal power, and as the source of a potentially crucial alliance for Byzantium was indeed strong for Kydones and others of his circle during the latter half of the fourteenth century. In the 1360s, in his first *Apology*, written before his trip to Rome, he mentioned the “armies of philosophers” in the “papal forces” and the thriving life of the metropolis of Old Rome. There is nothing in his correspondence or other writings to indicate that he ever revised this opinion significantly, though he did become more realistic about the papacy's ability to generate the military aid that he had hoped for from western Europe.

But although he once had plans to live in Venice, he never settled permanently in Italy, and did not even fulfill his intention of returning after 1371 in order to continue

²⁵ Ibid., p. 14, lines 17–18: εἰσὶν οἱ περὶ τὰ πράγματα μαντικῇ τινὶ με χρῆσθαι φασιν.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 22, lines 4–16; pp. 22–23, para. 23; letter 37 to John Laskaris Kalopheros (1371–72), p. 71, lines 41–49.

his Latin studies. Instead, Kydones pursued his political and intellectual agendas in Constantinople, remaining throughout his career a mediator of Latin culture for a younger generation of Byzantine intellectuals who, unlike him, took up residence in Italy in the late 1390s and early 1400s. He continued to urge his countrymen to readjust their view of western Europe and likened himself to Socrates who, in defending himself before the Athenian court gathered to judge him, described himself as the “gadfly of Athens,” entrusted with a divine mission to arouse his fellow citizens out of their complacency and intellectual lethargy. He also continued to offer his services to the emperor in aid of imperial embassies to Rome, and in 1384–85 he reminded Manuel II that he still had some “powerful” friends in Rome to whom he would willingly write on the emperor’s behalf.²⁷

Kydones also had some continuing contacts with Italians in Constantinople. To mention just one example, in 1386 he wrote to the abbot of a monastery in Constantinople in order to introduce a young man from Milan named Paul, who wanted to study Greek in the capital.²⁸ Paul had some knowledge of Plato and Aristotle, preferred Greek literature to Latin, and was aware that Latin literature and learning had its source in the Greek philosophers and writers. He had heard that Cicero and Boethius were disciples of Plato and Demosthenes. He was also conversant with some of the Greek church fathers, such as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzos, and John Chrysostom.²⁹ This young Milanese scholar is perhaps the earliest Italian known to have traveled to Constantinople to learn Greek literature at the source, so to speak, apart from Barlaam the Calabrian.³⁰

Despite the request of Emperor Manuel II that he remain in Constantinople,³¹ Kydones left for Italy again in 1390, hoping to settle there with a friend who was already living in the West. Kydones’ traveling companion was Manuel Chrysoloras, who a few years later became the first Byzantine to teach Greek publicly in Florence (from 1397 to December 1399). During this trip, Kydones went to Venice, where he remained for a year and was granted Venetian citizenship (January 1391).³² There he also met the young Florentine scholar Roberto Rossi, who studied Greek with Chrysoloras. In a letter to Kydones, Coluccio Salutati, the humanist chancellor of Florence, speaks of Rossi as “communem in doctrina filium,” which seems to indicate that Rossi regarded the elderly Kydones as a mentor as well.³³

²⁷Letter 302, *Corr.*, II, p. 221, lines 48–53: δίδεται γὰρ ἴσως αἰδοῦς τι καὶ πίστεως τοῖς ἡμετέροις γράμμασι παρὰ τῶν ἐκεῖ δυνατῶν.

²⁸Letter 360, *Corr.*, II, pp. 304–5; Paul is also mentioned in letter 435 (1389–90), pp. 392–93.

²⁹Cf. F. Tinnefeld, “Das Niveau der abendländischen Wissenschaft aus der Sicht gebildeter Byzantiner im 13. und 14. Jh.,” *ByzF* 6 (1979), 277–79, and idem, *Briefe*, I.1, p. 43 n. 241 and p. 219.

³⁰But, as Franz Tinnefeld pointed out (“Das Niveau,” 278 n. 127), the two are not on the same level since Barlaam was an Orthodox Greek monk from southern Italy, and Paul was an Italian from the north. Giuseppe Cammelli, in his pioneering work on Manuel Chrysoloras, did not take account of Kydones’ letter concerning Paul and therefore considered Guarino da Verona to be the first Italian to study Greek in Constantinople; see G. Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini e le origini dell’umanesimo*, I, *Manuele Crisolora* (Florence, 1941), 131–39.

³¹*The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, ed. G. T. Dennis, DOT 4 (Washington, D.C., 1977), letter 12 (1389–90), p. 33, lines 16–22.

³²Cf. R. J. Loenertz, “Démétrius Cydonès, citoyen de Venise,” *EO* 37 (1938), 125–26.

³³See F. Novati, ed., *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, Fonti per la storia d’Italia 17 (Rome, 1896), III, letter 13, p. 106; cf. Tinnefeld, *Briefe*, I.1, p. 43 and n. 242.

In 1391, not long after returning from Venice to Constantinople, Kydones wrote to his younger disciple Maximos Chrysoberges, a Greek Dominican in Pera who studied in Venice and Padua.³⁴ In his letter Kydones explained why he did not go to Rome and why he decided to leave Venice and return to Constantinople. He had to give up his intention of going to Rome and fulfilling his vow to return to the city of St. Peter because he had been advised by his Venetian friends that the route was too dangerous to travel. The advice of the papal legate, Cardinal Cosimo Migliorati (later Pope Innocent VII, 1404–6), who was in Venice at the time, was decisive. Kydones, who considered Venice merely “a city of merchants,”³⁵ therefore reluctantly returned to Constantinople without achieving his goal of visiting Rome again.

In a letter to Manuel II he regrets his decision to return to Constantinople only to see its sad state—an onslaught of the plague in the city, the emperor a servant of the Turkish emir: “I am terribly vexed at myself because I did not prefer to remain in a foreign land and hear about [my country’s] misfortunes from others, rather than see them and experience them myself after my return. This mistake I will correct by emigrating again.”³⁶

Both Kydones and Chrysoloras continued to look toward Italy and western Europe for aid against the Turks and perhaps for a refuge from them. In the fall of 1396 they again traveled together to Venice. Chrysoloras continued on to Florence, where he began his historic three-year stint teaching classical Greek language and literature. Sometime after arriving in Venice, however, Kydones left for Crete, where he died in the winter of 1397–98. In 1400 Chrysoloras left his teaching post in Florence and, in later years, traveled in Italy, France, Spain, and England on diplomatic missions for Manuel II. Thus the political needs of the dwindling empire took precedence over his intellectual ambitions.

Although his diplomacy ultimately failed, Kydones maintained his admiration for Thomistic theology and his respect for Latin culture. His many important translations of Latin patristic and scholastic texts, especially the works of Augustine, Aquinas, and Anselm of Canterbury—the major intellectual work of Kydones’ life—influenced both contemporary and future generations of Byzantines, who were able for the first time to read some of the major sources of Latin theology in their own language.³⁷ The continuity of his views in the fifteenth century, in the careers of Manuel Kalekas, Maximos Chrysoberges, Manuel Chrysoloras, and Cardinal Bessarion needs to be investigated further. Perhaps not only Kydones’ study of Latin theology but his recognition of the many ties that bound together the Christians of East and West was found worthy of emulation by these men.

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³⁴ Letter 443, *Corr.*, II, pp. 409–11.

³⁵ Letter 443 to Maximos Chrysoberges (1391), *Corr.*, II, p. 410, line 51: ἐμπόρων γὰρ μόνον ἄνωθεν ἡ πόλις.

³⁶ Letter 431 to Manuel II (1391), *Corr.*, II, pp. 386–88, esp. lines 43–46.

³⁷ Cf. F. Kianka, “The Letters of Demetrios Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina,” *DOP* 46 (1992), 157–59, on Kydones’ translations from Augustine.